

CLAIMS

We claim:

1 1. A method for providing multi-tiered broadcasting services to subscribers,
2 comprising the steps of:
3 broadcasting primary content over one or more primary content channels;
4 broadcasting secondary content over one or more secondary-content channels;
5 enabling reception of a first tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers subscribing
6 to said first tier receive only said primary content; and
7 enabling reception of a second tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers
8 subscribing to said second tier receive both said primary content and said secondary content.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said primary content comprises substantive
2 programming content and said secondary content comprises promotional content.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein said promotional content comprises commercial
2 advertising.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein each of said primary content channels is
2 associated with at least one secondary-content channel.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein each of said primary content channels is
2 associated with a different secondary content channel.

1 6. The method of claim 4, wherein each of said primary content channels is
2 associated with the same secondary content channel.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein said same secondary-content channel is part of a
2 service channel serving all of said primary content channels.

1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
2 requiring that second tier subscribers play at least a portion of said secondary content
3 before being able to play said primary content.

1 9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:
2 tracking how much of said secondary content has been played by said second-tier
3 subscriber; and
4 discontinuing the requirement that said second-tier subscribers play back said
5 secondary content upon the occurrence of a first predetermined triggering event.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein said first predetermined triggering event
2 comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said secondary content.

1 11. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of:
2 reinstating the requirement that said second-tier subscribers play back said secondary
3 content upon the occurrence of a second predetermined triggering event.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said second predetermined triggering event
2 comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said primary content.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein said second predetermined triggering event
2 comprises the changing from one primary content channel to another primary content channel
3 by a second-tier subscriber.

1 14. A system for providing multi-tiered broadcasting services to subscribers,
2 comprising:
3 means for broadcasting primary content over one or more primary content channels;
4 means for broadcasting secondary content over one or more secondary-content
5 channels;
6 means for enabling reception of a first tier broadcasting service whereby subscribers
7 subscribing to said first tier receive only said primary content; and
8 means for enabling reception of a second tier broadcasting service whereby
9 subscribers subscribing to said second tier receive both said primary content and said
10 secondary content.

1 15. The system of claim 14, wherein said primary content comprises substantive
2 programming content and said secondary content comprises promotional content.

1 16. The system of claim 15, wherein said promotional content comprises commercial
2 advertising.

1 17. The system of claim 14, wherein each of said primary content channels is
2 associated with at least one secondary-content channel.

1 18. The system of claim 17, wherein each of said primary content channels is
2 associated with a different secondary content channel.

1 19. The system of claim 17, wherein each of said primary content channels is
2 associated with the same secondary content channel.

1 20. The system of claim 19, wherein said same secondary-content channel is part of a
2 service channel serving all of said primary content channels.

1 21. The system of claim 14, further comprising:
2 means for requiring that second tier subscribers play at least a portion of said
3 secondary content before being able to play said primary content.

1 22. The system of claim 21, further comprising:
2 means for tracking how much of said secondary content has been played by said
3 second-tier subscriber; and
4 means for discontinuing the requirement that said second-tier subscribers play back
5 said secondary content upon the occurrence of a first predetermined triggering event.

1 23. The system of claim 22, wherein said first predetermined triggering event
2 comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said secondary content.

1 24. The system of claim 22, further comprising:
2 means for reinstating the requirement that said second-tier subscribers play back said
3 secondary content upon the occurrence of a second predetermined triggering event.

1 25. The system of claim 24, wherein said second predetermined triggering event
2 comprises the reaching of a threshold-level of playing of said primary content.

1 26. The system of claim 24, wherein said second predetermined triggering event
2 comprises the changing from one primary content channel to another primary content channel
3 by a second-tier subscriber.

1 27. A computer program product for providing multi-tiered broadcasting services to
2 subscribers, comprising a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable
3 program code embodied in the medium, the computer-readable program code comprising:
4 computer-readable program code that controls the broadcasting of primary content
5 over one or more primary content channels;
6 computer-readable program code that controls the broadcasting of secondary content
7 over one or more secondary-content channels;
8 computer-readable program code that enables reception of a first tier broadcasting
9 service whereby subscribers subscribing to said first tier receive only said primary content;
10 and
11 computer-readable program code that enables reception of a second tier broadcasting
12 service whereby subscribers subscribing to said second tier receive both said primary content
13 and said secondary content.

1 28. The computer program product of claim 27, wherein said primary content
2 comprises substantive programming content and said secondary content comprises
3 promotional content.

1 29. The computer program product of claim 28, wherein said promotional content
2 comprises commercial advertising.

1 30. The computer program product of claim 27, wherein each of said primary content
2 channels is associated with at least one secondary-content channel.

1 31. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein each of said primary content
2 channels is associated with a different secondary content channel.

1 32. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein each of said primary content
2 channels is associated with the same secondary content channel.

1 33. The computer program product of claim 32, wherein said same secondary-content
2 channel is part of a service channel serving all of said primary content channels.